



Vanquishing the V/PD

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This publication is directed primarily towards airport management to be disseminated to all levels of personnel working at your airfield. It does not matter how large or how small your airfield or how tight your budget may be, this information must be made available to your people by whatever means. Vanquishing the V/PD can be accomplished through a solid partnership between the FAA and airport management. The responsibility of making sure that the proper safeguards are in place; however, lies squarely on the shoulders of the airport management. Please use this information and all that follows as a guide by which to produce a safer environment at your airfield.

Aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) responders have a very demanding job. Their job includes the responsibility of safely driving on an airport when responding to an accident or incident. The ARFF responder must divide his or her attention between monitoring the chatter from numerous radios, driving in an environment radically different from city streets and anticipating what he or she will face when arriving at the scene of the accident or incident. Additionally, coordinating the movement of several vehicles puts greater demand on the ARFF responder.

Because driving in an airport environment is demanding, it is important for the ARFF responder to become as familiar with airport operations as possible--so familiar that driving on the airfield becomes second nature. Studying airport signs, marking and lighting is important but it is only one part of becoming truly familiar with airport operations. The other part is the practical experience of driving on the airfield. The more one drives on the airfield and talks to the air traffic control tower (ATCT), the more the

knowledge learned in the classroom will fall into place and make more sense to the driver as he navigates the airfield. Practical experience also instills confidence.

Consider the following points when practicing airfield driving:

- Drive the airfield as often as possible
- Drive the airfield under varying conditions (day, night, fog, rain, during construction, during taxiway closures, etc.)
- When driving the airfield try to drive all taxiway and runway routes
- Practice airfield driving when air traffic is light and the ATCT is not busy
- When at the ARFF station or on the airfield, monitor radio calls and try to visualize the overall picture of traffic and the general flow of traffic
- Accompany airfield operations during their airport inspections to observe their driving and communication techniques
- Warn the ATCT that you intend to practice driving on the airfield so they do not become confused with your actions
- Always have an airport diagram available
- Remember that you need a specific clearance to cross each runway
- If a clearance does not make sense, is not absolutely clear or is not accurate, verify the clearance before you move

Generally speaking, the more time you log driving on the airport and communicating with the ATCT, the more confident you will become with your airfield driving. With time you will see the “big picture” and the mystery of driving the airfield will disappear. Eventually, all of the knowledge learned in the classroom will begin to make sense. And with enough practice, driving the airfield will become second nature.

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